

Later Workers

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Overseer of Oregon, USA

Revised August 10, 2019

The Ordained Ministry

The Grace of God

The Spirit Makes the Difference

The Perfect Way – Not an Organization

The Origin of Christmas

The Origin of God's Way

Howard Leslie Mooney

Born: June 23, 1907 Chesaw, Washington USA

Died: January 21, 1999 Portland, Oregon USA

Howard L. Mooney (1907 – 1999) Find-a-Grave

Howard and his sister Rose both made their choice in the same home meeting in their parents' home on June 17, 1917 when Howard was 9 years old.

They were both baptized in July that same year and both spent their lives in the work.

Rose J. Mooney (1905 – 2000) Find-a-Grave

The Ordained Ministry Dronin, Australia , December 20, 1980 Howard Mooney

"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." The Bible tells us about an **ordained ministry** and an **ordained message**, and an **ordained peace**, and an **ordained fellowship**, and an **ordained future** that God has planned for His people.

One of the meanings of the word "ordain" is to invest with power. When a man is ordained by an organization, all the power of that organization is behind that ordination, but when a person is ordained by God, all the power of heaven and earth is behind that ordination. Isn't that the assurance Jesus gave to His disciples that last night He was with them, when He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, you go forth and carry My work on in the world and I will be right there to back you up with that power right to the end of the world." In this chapter of Mark which we read together, we read of the order of God's ordination. He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach. **He ordained them, and then He trained them, and then He sent them out to preach.**

A few years ago when we were having this compulsory military draft over in America , we had a young man that had just gone out into the Work a few days before, and he received notice to appear before his draft board for induction into the Army. We obtained an audience with the Board, and we explained the position and gave them a chance to get acquainted with that young man. We told them about our Work and how desperately we needed him, and they were very favorable toward him, and granted him his deferment. One of the members on the draft board was also a board member of the local Lutheran Church . He said, "Did I understand you correctly, that in your church the ministers are ordained first and then trained afterwards?" I said, "That is true." He said, "Isn't that rather unorthodox?" I said, "It might be in comparison with the way it is done in the religious world, but this is the way Jesus did it," and I had a wonderful opportunity to talk to them about the two and two ministry, and I quoted this verse.

Maybe I can tell you a few things tonight why Jesus planned a two and two ministry. One is so that the young workers starting out can have access to private tutoring, instead of being run through a seminary with a mass of other students, a kind of mass production. God has planned when a young worker starts in the Work under the guidance of an older worker and with the help of the Holy Spirit, they get the privilege of private tutoring and then the next year they get another companion that might help them along another line, and the next year they get another companion that might help them along another line, and I said at the end of five years this young worker has not only had five years of private tutoring, but he has had five wonderful years of practical experience in the ministry.

He turned to the other members on the Board, and he said, "Men, that makes sense. That is the most practical thing I have ever heard." And he said, "We are mighty glad to let a young man go forth in a ministry of this nature." When we were leaving the court house, I said to the young man with me, " **Dale**, we don't have to make any apology concerning the way of Jesus, because from whichever angle you look at it, it is the most sensible and practical way you have ever heard of. In fact, it is the only thing that works, and it has never needed a change from the days of Jesus right to now. So, this is the order of the ordination. He ordained them, and then He trained them, and then He sent them out to preach.

Have you ever wondered how your workers were ordained? Would you like to know how your workers were ordained? I had a Chinese sister worker in Hong Kong ask me that question once. She was reading where Jesus ordained His ministers and how Paul mentioned that he was ordained, and she asked, "Is there a record in the Bible of how that ordination took place?" I said, "There surely is," and I quoted 2 Corinthians 8:16, "Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you." I said, "When God ordains a person, He doesn't do so by putting a diploma in their pocket, but He does so by putting something into their heart—the same earnest care that He Himself has for a perishing world," the care that causes that young person to turn their back on all their future prospects and everything life holds dear, and on everything else because of that which God has put, not in their pocket, but in their heart.

That is why when Jesus was speaking to the Lord's people about the necessity and urgency of more workers, He said, "You pray to the Lord of the harvest, you appeal to the Lord of the harvest, to see if He cannot send out more, because that is the way it is done." You cannot make a worker by outward pressure or anything like that. God never works in that order, but God always works in the heart, and He puts in the heart that same earnest care that He Himself has for a perishing world. A diploma in the pocket would never change a person. All that a diploma does is gives them a passport into society. But when God puts into the heart of a young man or woman the same earnest care that He Himself has for a perishing world, there is something about that that changes that young life completely.

Would you like me to give you some evidences, some proofs that this ministry is still ordained by God, and all the power of God and heaven is still behind that ordination? You have proofs on either side of the platform, to begin with—these young sisters and these young brothers! You know that only the power of God working in the heart of a young person could cause them to do what these young folks are doing, turning their backs on the possibility of a home of their own, and a family of their own, blasting every other prospect in life and all that a human heart holds dear. They are doing so because the ordination of God is working in their heart, creating there the same earnest care and love God Himself has for a perishing world. All the power of heaven and earth is behind them, enabling them to take a step like this. And I should add, when you see these older workers on either side of the platform, past the years of retirement, past the time when people of the business world have retired, taking it easy and enjoying themselves, but you see these older servants of God putting more into it than ever before, it is proof that the ordination of God is still upon those old souls and all the power of Heaven is helping them pour out the last drops of their sacrifice. They still have in their hearts the same earnest care that God Himself has for a perishing world.

Another proof, may I give you? This involves money, and we generally don't like to talk about money in connection with the Gospel or any part of our Work because this is too sacred to be associated with money. But, at the same time, this is a miracle, and the more you appreciate this miracle, the more you appreciate the Truth. The fact that God's servants can go into all parts of the world and freely give the Gospel today, without any collection, without any tithing, without any books to sell, and no missionary board to support them, and no knowledge of where the next penny is coming from—when men and women can do that in this selfish age, that is a compound proof, folks, that all the power of Heaven and earth is backing them up, or this thing could not take place in such a selfish world. When we talk to people about this ministry and tell them we can freely give this Gospel, they say it would not work today—it would not work in this selfish age, but it does work in this selfish age.

Jesus said to those first ministers when He sent them out to preach, you won't have to worry a thing about your future, or your food or clothing. Look at the birds of the air. If you go forth to do His will, you won't need to worry about your clothing. Look at the lilies of the field, "They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these; wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you? Therefore, take no thought saying, 'What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed?' for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. You seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and I will see to it that you are taken care of. Not a board behind you, and not a group behind you, not any individual pledged to support you, but I will see you are fed and clothed along the way"—a miracle which only God Himself is able to bring about.

We had an experience during the depression years. I don't know if you ever heard of the depression years over in America—they were called the hungry years because a lot of people were hungry. In one year's time, during that period, 18,000 churches over there closed their doors—in one year that happened. They could not pay the preacher, the organist, the janitor, the fuel bill, the light bill, so they just had to close their doors. Many of those churches had missionaries over in other countries and they could not send any help to them or a ticket to come home. They were stranded and the U.S. Government, at their own government expense, sent ocean liners over and rescued those stranded missionaries.

Oh! I am glad to tell you this, folks, that during those hungry years never once did we have to bring a worker back from a foreign field, and we had many of them there, and never once did they suffer want or were they a charge to the country where they were laboring. I was just a young worker at that time and it was a wonderful confirmation to my faith to know that He Who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel" could still stand true to His promise even in the depression period, when He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." I will see that you are fed and clothed along

the way. This is the miracle which accompanies this ministry and it is this which has made this ministry revolutionary different from any other in the world. That is because the ordination of God is upon it and all the power of Heaven and earth is backing up that ordination.

May I tell you a little now about the ordained message? 1 Corinthians 2:7, where Paul said, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” If you don’t mind marking your Bible, you would find it beneficial to underscore those marvelous words “unto our glory.” He is saying that everything pertaining to the Gospel is planned for our benefit that we might be the recipients and that we might have the glorious privilege of enjoying it in our own lives.

May I tell you now about the revolutionary difference between this fellowship and all other religious fellowships? My parents were dedicated people; they were just as religious before they got saved as they were afterwards. My father was a deacon and my mother a deaconess and Sunday school superintendent, and you know they had to work day and night to keep that organization going. Those of you who were associated with some religious organization before you were saved know the truth of those words—you had to work day and night to keep your organization going.

But here is a fellowship where everything in Heaven and earth is working to keep you going. This is what is said here. This is planned for our glory that you might be the recipient. It is not a fellowship where you have to work to keep the organization going; it is a fellowship where everything is working to keep you going. This convention has been planned by God for your benefit, to help you keep on going. The help God is giving you at this convention is to help you go on triumphantly through another year.

Paul said, “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” That was for your sakes. And when Paul was writing to the church at Thessalonica reminding them of the ministry, the unselfish ministry that he and his companion had brought unto that city when they brought the Gospel, he said, “Ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.” We didn’t ask for a penny of your money, we didn’t ask for your service or anything from you, but all we asked was that you would receive what we were offering to you, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

God ordained that it would be that way instead of you being in a movement where you had to work day and night to keep that organization going. God has planned for your glory and your benefit that you would be a part of a worldwide fellowship where everything in heaven and earth is working to keep you going. Paul said, “This is a mystery.” The reason it is a mystery is because it is a miracle. It produces a miracle life. Where does that life come from? People will listen to the simplest message you ever heard and all of a sudden something begins to happen in the process of time, and your understanding begins to change, and your outlook begins to change, and your attitude begins to change, and in the process of time you become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The mystery is what is there about this simple message of the Gospel that can bring about a miraculous change like that? When Jesus was trying to explain this change to people, He spoke of the parable of the sower and the seed, the seed sown in the ground producing a new life. When the Gospel is sown in the hearts of those who hear it, it produces a new life that was not there before. When they listen to the Gospel, the word of the truth of the Gospel settles down in their heart and produces a new life. It doesn’t renovate the old life; it produces a new life that was never there before. That is the miracle.

The reason Jesus used that illustration, and maybe you have never thought of this—in your garden every year, whether a flower garden, vegetable garden, or wheat field there is a miracle that takes place that you cannot explain. Science with all their ingenuity cannot explain it. All that they know is that some power beyond the comprehension of man transforms that dormant seed into that living vibrant wonderful something that it becomes. Jesus said, when the seed of the truth of the Gospel, this message that God ordained before the world unto our glory, when that settles into a person’s heart, it brings forth the same miraculous change that takes place in your flower garden or vegetable garden or wheat field every year.

When Paul was writing his second letter to the Corinthians, in chapter 3, he said, we don’t need to carry about a pocketful of papers to prove we are the servants of God. He didn’t put it in those words. He said, “Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you,” because there were those going forth at that time presenting themselves as apostles of Christ, and they had a pocketful of papers to prove it, letters of recommendation and commendation, and this they felt was evidence of the fact that they were genuine ministers of Christ.

Paul said such are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as the apostles of Christ. If they had been true apostles of Christ, they would never have needed a pocketful of papers to prove their genuineness or that they were true servants of God. Paul said we don’t need a pocketful of papers to prove we are the true servants of God. To these Christians at Corinth he said, “You are our epistle.” You are our letter of recommendation. The fact that our message can produce converts like you, and can bring you into a heavenly fellowship that you are now enjoying, that is the proof the ordination of God is on this message.

On another occasion he said, “You are the proof of our apostleship.” You are the seal of our apostleship, the fact that it can produce people like you. If you want to know the miracle that took place at Corinth, look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and it will tell you the sordid background of those people at Corinth, but when Paul wrote this second letter, those people had now become new creatures, and that is why he said we don’t need a pocketful of papers to prove to the world that we are the genuine servants of Christ; you are our letter of recommendation. When you think of the sad state you people were in when you obeyed the Gospel, but now you have been washed, and you have been sanctified, and you have been cleansed and have received the spirit of God, and now you are new creatures in Christ Jesus. You are God’s tillage, you are God’s temple, a wonderful change had taken place, a miracle that happened in their life, and when you see a miracle take place in the life of a person whose background is so far out, you understand it more fully.

I received a letter in the mail today with a convention picture in it, and on that picture was a young woman. Five years ago when that young woman came to the Gospel meetings she was as far out in the hippie world as a person could possibly be – every evidence of

dissipation. She came to the Gospel meetings, and in the third meeting she professed. She was desperate for help and she realized here is the life I am needing. She was so happy over the change that took place in her life, we felt it was just emotional, or maybe it was an aftermath of the drugs she had taken, but no it wasn't; she was genuinely happy that she had found the way out, a satisfaction for the first time in her life. She had been only a few weeks professing when she offered for the Work, but we told her that in this ministry people prove this from every angle so that when they go out in this Work they can talk from the background of their own experience. Jesus said, "We testify of that which we have seen," we talk from the background of our own experience. We said, "You experience this, you let God continue His work and later on we will talk about a place in the Work."

Three years later we gave that girl a place in the Work. This picture was taken at the convention. It was taken at the end of her second year in the Work. I saw her recently standing on a platform like this—no evidence of the past dissipation of her life, no marks to show anything had happened. The way she stood up, and the way she beamed, you would have thought she had grown up in the most godly home. It is a comfort to us as God's servants to know there is no one beyond the love of God and there is no one beyond the reach of the Gospel if a person is honest enough to accept it in their heart like in the case of those Corinthians. When people come out of such a sordid background, the change is more outstanding and most noticeable.

This is what Nicodemus was talking about that night he came to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher come from God, for no one else can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him." He was referring to the miracles he had seen that had taken place in the lives of those disciples. He knew the Pharisee church could not do it. Jesus did not have to tell him, like he told some of the Pharisees, they were like whited sepulchers. He was using an illustration they could understand because people would from time to time whitewash the sepulchers to make them white and beautiful, but all it was doing was to cover up the fact that death and corruption were working on the inside. When Jesus said, "Ye are like whited sepulchers which indeed appear beautiful unto men, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness," He was saying, you are just like that, you are a sacrificial people and dedicated to your cause, and living up to the best of your ability to what you believe, but you are just putting whitewash on the surface. You are not taking care of the dead corrupt condition inside of you. Jesus did not have to tell Nicodemus that. He already knew it.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus that night, it was with the question, "How can I get that miracle?" Otherwise, the conversation would have been disjointed. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that thou doesn't except God be with him." And Jesus said, "Nicodemus, you must be born again." I believe Jesus saw in the heart of that man that night this great question, "How can I have that miracle in my life!" Oftentimes men and women have come in contact with our brethren, maybe working with them, or neighbors to them, but they saw the miracle of God that had taken place in their lives.

And I could tell you tonight of a number who have come to us down through a period of time and asked us, "How can I get that same miracle in my life?" I wonder if there is someone here tonight and that burning question is in your heart, and you are asking that question, "How can I get this miracle in my life?" If that question is there, we want to assure you that this miracle is within the reach of you the same as anyone else. You just honestly receive the seed and you will prove in your own experience, not from looking on others anymore, you will prove in your own experience that the ordination of God is behind this message and all the power of Heaven and earth is backing up that ordination.

May I speak to you about the ordained peace that God has planned for His people? Isaiah 26:12, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also has wrought all our works in us." This emphasizes the fact that this peace that passeth all understanding is brought about by God working in us. We have already told you about God putting into the heart of young people the same earnest care for perishing souls that He Himself has, God sowing into the hearts of men and women a seed that brings a miracle life, and the secret of that peace of God which passeth all understanding is made possible because of God working all our work within us.

There is a wonderful study about peace in this Book of Isaiah, and maybe some of our young workers would like to make a little study of them. I always appreciated the older workers that came to us when I was a young worker and oftentimes dropped a little handful of purpose for my benefit. They often said, "You take this now, and you go home and see what you can get out of it. You make a study of it; you take it and make it your own." That helped me when I was a young worker, and I have found myself time and time again just suggesting, now this will be a good study for you. There is so much mentioned about the peace of God in the Book of Isaiah. We were hearing about Jesus, the Prince of Peace. You put the government of your life on His shoulders and of that peace there will be no end. You read of God leading His people in a way of peace—even in a world of violence on every side they go in perfect peace because they are walking in His way. There are some wonderful things mentioned here in this Book of Isaiah about this peace that passeth all understanding.

This 12th verse explains how this is brought about. It is God working within us. Shall we connect that now with a verse in the New Testament, Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." When you professed and first gave your life to the Lord, did you even have a hope that you could be enjoying what you are tonight? You didn't! This is the only thing in the world that turns out to be more exceeding abundant than you hoped or thought, above all that we asked or thought, and so much better than we ever expected. Think of anything else you turn your hand to—when the glamour wears off, you find it is not what you expected it to be. This is so much better than we ever expected. When I stood up in the meeting and gave my heart to God, I never dreamed, I never had the least idea I would be enjoying what I went on to enjoy. When I left my home to go in the Work, I had no way of knowing what a glorious future God had planned for me, a future that turned out away beyond anything I ever thought could possibly be my portion. This is the only thing that turns out to be better than we thought, and it is all made possible because of the God that is working in us. When we let Him have His rightful

way and accomplish His work, then this verse will be your reality. Isaiah 32:17, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

It is so simple. It is not a matter of attaining to some great scholastic standard, or to be able to pass some great IQ test or accomplish some great thing. Just honestly turning your life over to Him, and trusting your life to His keeping. Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." If you do that, He will keep you in perfect peace, proving that this peace He offers to men and women is an ordained peace. It's a peace that the world cannot give and cannot take away. All the power of heaven is behind that ordination.

I would like to read the next verse regarding an ordained future—1 Chronicles 17:9. This is the Lord speaking. "Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place and shall be moved no more, neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more as at the beginning." I used to read that verse and think that it referred to the Promised Land and what God would do for them. But one day it dawned on me, this promise was made to them years after they entered into the Promised Land, so I checked the dates in my Bible, and it was 409 years after they had entered into the Promised Land that God made this promise to them. This was a promise that was in their future, and this is the promise God has made concerning your future.

God has ordained a place, a place that one day He wants you to finish up in, where you will move no more, and be wasted no more, and the enemies won't bother you any more, and you will never know the falling of a teardrop, or an ache or a pain or any distress like that. "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth." He created the Heaven first—a place in Heaven for you before He ever created the earth, or created man. He had prepared for them that place.

Just like the offering in Leviticus 1—before that offering ever went on the altar, God had a clean place provided for the ashes after the sacrifice was consumed. That clean place is just a little picture of the clean place that God has planned for you and me when our little sacrifice on earth is over: a place where there will be no more tears, no more sorrows, no more struggles and no more battles; all the former things will have passed away. When Peter spoke of that, he said, it is an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that passeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you." That is that clean place; that is the place God has ordained. Four things cannot happen to it: 1) it cannot be corrupted; 2) it cannot be defiled; 3) it cannot fade; and 4) it cannot be taken away from you. It is reserved for you who are kept by the power of God. It is an ordained place. All the power of Heaven and earth is at your disposal to help you finish triumphantly in the race, so that at the end of the journey you can end up in that ordained place. This is the whole story of the Gospel. There are a lot of details that could be worked into the story. This is the general skeleton or outline – the wonderful story of salvation that God has made possible and that is within the reach of everyone.

We would just like to close by assuring you that there is not a person in this meeting that is beyond the reach of anything we have been talking about in this meeting tonight. This is something that is within the reach of all if you are honest enough to receive it into yourself and let God work as He wants to work in your life. Then you will prove to your satisfaction the ordination of God is behind this, and all the power of heaven and earth is backing up that ordination. It is something too good to miss, and I hope no one in this meeting will take any chance of missing it.

The Grace of God
By Howard Mooney
Chelan, Washington Convention
June 13, 1971

2 Tim.1:9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

This verse reminds us that before the world began God had a definite purpose for every life. This verse also reminds us that before the world began God provided the necessary **grace** that would enable us to fit into that purpose. He said that it was according to His own purpose and **grace**. The two go together, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. I do not think that it is necessary this afternoon to mention very much about God's purpose for our lives. I believe we all know the Bible enough to know that Rom. 8: 29-30 tells us that God's eternal purpose for every life is that we might be made like Jesus.

We often tell people in Gospel meetings that God's purpose is not to make His people good, the devil can do that, too. To some of the most religious people that ever walked the face of the earth, and they were people who believed in the True God and the True Bible, Jesus had to say to them, "Ye are of your father the devil and his works will ye do." But the eternal purpose of God for your life and mine, for every life, is that we might be made like Jesus. That we might have the same spirit and nature and love and understanding that Jesus had so that we can have fellowship with Jesus and sit down and enjoy fellowship with others who are also like Jesus.

The part about this verse that I wanted to comment most on this afternoon is **this grace** – the full provision of **grace** that God has provided for His people. This is the provision made before the foundation of the world, the provision that He made through His **grace** that we might become like Him. This word **GRACE**, which means unmerited favor...something we don't deserve, takes in everything that comes to us from God. It's a channel through which God's blessing flows into the lives of His people. Paul said that "by **grace** are ye saved" (Eph. 2:8). He said again, the **grace** of God bringeth salvation also teaches us. He says again that we have received forgiveness of sin through His blood according to the riches of His **grace**. He said again, and this is from his own testimony, that by the **grace** of God I am what I am.

In other words, all that I am and all that I have and all that makes my life worthwhile comes to me through the avenue of God's **grace**. That is why it is such a thrill to us as we go from place to place presenting the Gospel story to know that this **grace** of God which bringeth salvation and that makes the lives of God's people whole and complete is some thing that is in the reach of everyone. It is to us through Christ Jesus.

I would like to remind you this afternoon of the abundance of His **grace**. The unlimited surely. You will find these terms in the Bible = abounding **grace**, His abundant **grace**, and according to the riches of His **grace**. It reminds us that in the Father's house there is **grace** to spare. The prodigal son said when he was returning to his father, "in the father's house there is bread and to spare," and you can carry that thought over into this category and say, that in the Father's house there is also **grace** and to spare. I don't care from which ever angle you look at it, in the Father's house is plenty and to spare of everything that God's people need to make them like Jesus and to prepare them for an eternal home with Him.

I was speaking along this line, not on this subject but along this line, down in Arizona a few years ago and I mentioned that in the Father's house there is power and to spare, and I mentioned a number of other things that were abundant in the Father's house, and a mother came up to me after the meeting and showed me the notes that her little 12-year old boy had taken and these notes read that in the Father's house is bread and "despair", and in the Father's house there is power and "despair", and I was kind of despairing myself for fear it might have discouraged the little fellow, but we were glad to see him stand up in the meeting that night and give his life to the Lord anyway.

There are two verses I'd like to give along this line. I'll quote them first and then give you the references later on to jot down. The first one reads like this, "and God is able to make all **grace** abound towards you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work." Did you ever notice how that verse reads, it begins with abounding **grace** and it ends up with abounding work. Now this reminds me of the fact that God never intended that I would just barely make it. God never intended that I would get in only by the skin of my teeth, that I might just limp along. God has made all **grace** abound towards us so that we might be abounding Christians. I'll quote that verse again, "and God has made all **grace** abound towards you that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work." You'll find that in 2 Cor. 9:8: *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."*

It is a reminder to us that in the Father's house there's **grace** and to spare, and that if you and I will avail ourselves of the full provision of this **grace**, it won't be a matter of us just barely making it or limping along. God has made all **grace** abound so that you and I might abound unto every good work. The other verse reads like this, in part, "and where sin abounded, **grace** did much more abound."

I don't know of any verse that should be more encouraging to us this afternoon than that verse because we're leaving here soon to go back into a world where sin is abounding, and we know that it is abounding more and more with the passing of the years. But isn't it nice to know that God is able to offset that by just giving a little more **grace** — He just gives a little more **grace**. "Where sin abounded **grace** did much more abound."

Someone was talking to me awhile back and they said that our young people have so much to cope with today than we had when we were young people. And I said, "That's true." And I would just like to say to you young people in this meeting this after noon that we want you to know that we appreciate the fact, that we realize the fact, that you do have things to cope with that we didn't have as young people—and I wish that you young people knew how often the Lord's servants go into their room and get down on their knees and pray for you because we realize that you young folks have a lot to put up with.

And when this man said to me that the young people have much more to cope with today than we had when we were young people I said to him, "That's true"; but I said, "Do you realize that our young people have a lot more to help them today than we had when we were young people?" We got to one convention each year when I was a boy. Our folks always saw that we got to that one convention, but that is all we ever got. At special meeting, we got one special meeting. I never sat through a complete mission until after I was in the Work.

I just marvel at how much some of my younger companions know, these young boys that are growing up under the influence of God today, how much more they know than I knew when I started in the Work. In fact, I've had young companions that were more developed to start with than I was at the end of my first year in the Work. Now there are some of you young people, I suppose all of you young people in the meeting, today who are within reach of Gospel meetings — and we thank God that you avail yourselves of the help that God gives you in these Gospel meetings — it's so vital.

I suppose some of you young people will be getting to more conventions than this convention this year. I don't mind if you do. I just like to see our young folks availing themselves of all the help they can because this is the provision of God's **grace**. God is giving you a little more help to offset the increasing pressure that is on the outside. I don't think that we as God's people should be the least bit panicky or apprehensive as we look into the future.

In fact, Jesus told us not to be in the chapters some of you were studying a week ago in the book of Mark. He spoke of the hearts of men failing them in the world for fear of the things that were coming to pass, realizing that as far as the conditions in the world are concerned, things are out of control, but he said when you see these things come to pass be not troubled. And I don't think that we as God's people need to be too apprehensive or panicky as we look into the future because we know this, that as sin abounds, and it will abound more and more according to the scriptures we have this wonderful assurance that where sin abounds **grace** will much more abound. You may be sure of that.

In other words, you'll always find, regardless of the surrounding conditions that in the Father's house, there's **grace** and to spare. Some of you older people in this tent this afternoon will remember our old brother, John Vint, had a little poem that he used to quote along this line. Maybe I could refresh your memory by requoting it. It's not very long so it won't interfere with the meeting too much, and it goes:

*"He giveth more **grace** when the burdens grow greater, He sendeth more strength when the labors increase,
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy, To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.*

*"When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, The Father's full giving has only begun.*

*"His love has no limit, His **grace** has no measure, His power no boundaries known unto man,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and He giveth and He giveth again."*

I would just like to say again in passing, folks, that you need not be panicky as you look into the future even though sin is abounding, and it will abound more and more. You just remember that where sin did abound, **grace** did much more abound. That has been proven in the past and it will be equally true in the future. Regardless of what surrounding conditions may be, we will always prove that in the Father's house there is **grace** to spare.

Would you like to read of an extreme case of where this **grace** worked? If you would, you'll find it in the example of Jesus. I'm glad that in all the avenues of Truth that we might pursue, we can turn to Jesus and we can see Him a perfect example. We often say that Jesus was the **Grace** of God, personified. The **grace** of God in all its glory was manifested in the life of Jesus, and I am going to give you a few verses along that line.

The one verse reads: "and ye know the **grace** of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that though He were rich and yet for our sake He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich." I read that verse over his morning and I thought, well, if the **grace** of God would enable Jesus to give up all that He gave up in Heaven and earth for your sake and mine, if the **Grace** of God would enable Jesus to give up all of that, well, surely that same **grace** at our disposal will enable you and me to give up what little God asks us to give up along the way. That's found in 2 Cor. 8:9.

There's another verse that tells us that Jesus, by the **grace** of God, tasted death for every man. You read that in Heb. 2:9. And again I say, if the **grace** of God was sufficient to enable Jesus to go even to the death of Calvary after living a life of death, dying to himself, terminating upon the cross of Calvary; if the **grace** of God would enable Jesus to do that, then should that same **grace** at our disposal not enable us to face the little daily dying that might come into our experience.

Does it dawn on you folks that God has actually placed at your disposal the same **grace** that He gave to His Son, Jesus? You're told that in John 1:16, "of His fullness have all we received and **grace** for **grace**." There's a verse in Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 8, verse 17 that has electrified me a great deal the past while, in fact every time I think of it, it makes me tingle right down to the toes! It tells us there that if we're children, if we've been born into God's family, if we have received His spirit of adoption, He said if we're children then we're heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

How wonderful folks, if we can take that in this afternoon—that God has actually made you and me joint-heirs with Christ. That means that we share and share alike. That means that God has placed at your disposal everything that He placed at the disposal of His Son, Jesus. That means that you and I have access to the same mind that Christ had and that's why Paul wrote to the Christians don't be satisfied with anything less. Don't you accept anything less. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

That also means that you and I have access to the same spirit. That same loving, tender, compassionate spirit that fills the bosom of Christ. Because Paul said again, "If any man have not this spirit of Christ he is none of His." And that also means that you and I have access to the same **grace** that was given to Christ—for of His fullness have all we received and **grace** for **grace**. I would like to say again, folks, if you don't mind a little repetition—I would like to say again, if that **grace** placed at the disposal of Jesus and enabled Him to give up all that He gave up and even face the cross of Calvary so that you and I could avail ourselves of that same **grace**, then shouldn't that be sufficient for us?

Do you expect to find any experience as you face the future – any experience but what God could say to you my **grace** is sufficient for you, as you go through this experience? God never asks us to take a single step but what He will give us the **grace** to do it, God will never ask you to make a single separation but what He will give you the **grace** to do it. And God will never ask you to put forth a single effort but what He will give you the **grace** to do it. And there is not an experience that you and I will find ourselves facing this coming year but what we can look up into the face of the Father and hear Him say, "Now don't worry, my **grace** is sufficient for you.

I would like to give another extreme case in which the **grace** of God was manifested. And this is found in the 11th chapter of Acts. The Greeks know nothing of the Bible, were ungodly people and came from a base background. A great number believed and the Hand of the Lord was with them. When the church at Jerusalem heard of it they sent Barnabas down. When he came and saw the "**Grace** of God" in their lives, he marveled at what God worked there and he was glad. God's **grace** was sufficient for them, just as it had been for the Jews.

When the brethren up at Jerusalem heard about it, they could hardly take it in, that these ungodly Greeks had actually received this.

In one sense, it is a marvelous thing. And in one sense, it is marvelous to see the **grace** of God working in any life. That's a miracle! It is a marvelous thing. And in one sense, it was even marvelous in the case of the Jews, although they knew the true Bible and the true God, and they had been prepared by their prophets for the coming of the Gospel.

And so, in one sense, it was not too astounding that these people had faith enough to accept this because they were prepared for it. But not those Greeks! Those people had never heard of the true God—most of them—they knew nothing about the true Bible. They had no true prophets to prepare the way for them. They knew nothing of these things. They came from a base background and yet the **grace** of God worked just as effectively in their lives of those poor Greeks, as it did in the life of the religious Jews.

Can you understand then, what Paul meant when he said, "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation — to the Jew first and also to the Greek." It works just as well in the life of those ungodly Greeks as it worked in the life of the God fearing Jew. And this is an other wonderful reminder to us as God's servants, that there is nobody in whose case this will not work if they will just open their hearts and receive the **grace** of God. One of the fears that I had when I first started out into the Work was that we might find somebody in whose case this wouldn't work and I knew that if we found one exception to the rule that my faith henceforth would be shattered.

And my faith was tested in our first mission. Our older brother, Jim Jennings, that some of you in this meeting remember was my first companion and we were laboring among some of the most ungodly, uncivilized people that I'd ever been among. We would be visiting in the homes and Jim, in his enthusiasm, would sit on the edge of the chair and look into the faces of those people and tell some of the wonderful things that God would do for them if they would give Him the chance. I would actually hold my breath and wish he would go a little easy because I just couldn't feature God doing this in the lives of those people. But I think that God knew that my faith needed strengthening and He moved upon some of those to profess.

And those ungodly people became new creatures in Christ Jesus because of the **grace** of God. Some of them are grandparents now and they are still professing and they are rejoicing more today than they ever did before over this wonderful something that was brought into their lives. Some of them have children and grandchildren now professing. And to me it is a wonderful evidence to the fact that there is no one beyond the love of God and there is no one beyond the hope of the Gospel.

I'm glad that in the beginning God planned both His purpose and His **grace**. He planned something that would work in any life, in any age, and under any condition. Can you understand then why, when Barnabas saw the **grace** of God among these Greeks, he was glad? This helps me to understand also, as a connecting thought, of what Paul meant when He wrote about Titus. And he said, "Thanks be to God." This is another essence of thanksgiving like our sister was just talking to us about. He said, "Thanks be to God who had put this same earnest care in the heart of Titus for you." I don't know if Paul had Timothy in mind, but I believe he did when he wrote that verse.

Now it was wonderful to see this earnest care that God has put into the heart of Timothy. But in one sense, you would rather expect it, because that man had grown up—that boy had grown up under the influence of a grandmother and mother who had an unfeigned faith like our brother was telling us about yesterday. And this boy, Timothy, was brought up to know the Holy Scripture from his youth. And so, in one sense, it wasn't too unusual for that young boy to go out into the Work. And God could put into his heart the care that He did for his fellowmen. But here was a Greek boy—Titus. He couldn't boast of the fact that he had a grandmother and a mother who had unfeigned faith. Or that he had known the Holy Scripture from his youth.

I don't know just when Titus professed, but it was very evident that he didn't have the background that Timothy had, and yet when Paul talked of the place that young Greek boy was filling in the ministry, he said, "Thanks be to God who had put the same earnest care in the heart of Titus for you." Did you ever stop to realize, friends, that is what God does when He ordains His ministers? Instead of putting a diploma in their pockets, He puts something in their hearts. He puts in their heart a care for dying men and women — a love for a perishing humanity that will cause them to leave their homes and often their land, and blight every other prospect in life, to go out gladly and freely giving their lives in the preaching of the Gospel. That's because when God ordains His ministers, His servants, He doesn't put a diploma in their pocket. He puts something in their heart. A something that makes them feel, woe is to me, if I preach not the Gospel. Well, now isn't this wonderful, friends, that the **grace** of God put that in the heart of that young Greek, Titus, just as He put it in the heart of that boy, Timothy.

The book of Hebrews is an interesting study of **grace**. There are a number of times that **grace** is referred to in this book of Hebrews. In the 12th chapter, verse 28, Paul sums up a lot of the things that he had been writing by saying, "Wherefore we received of this kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have **grace** — let us have **grace** — whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and with Godly fear." He had been emphasizing the fact in this book that we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved. He said to begin with, "Thy **Throne**, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is a sceptre of Thy kingdom." He emphasized the fact that the High Priest of this kingdom is one that could save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He mentioned the fact that we had access to the cleansing of the blood of the everlasting covenant.

And in this whole book of Hebrews he was emphasizing the fact that this is something that is eternal and secure. And then he terminates this all by saying, "wherefore we receiving this Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have **grace**." In other words, we don't need to worry about the future of God's workmanship on the earth. But what we do need is that something would separate us

from it. And that's why we do need to worry about it that something would separate us from it. And that's why he encourages this people—you avail yourself of the **grace** of God so that you might be secure in this thing, which is eternally secure.

Chapter 12, verse 15 is something that has removed more people from the Kingdom of God than anything else. He spoke of the root of bitterness. And I would just like to say in passing, folks, that there is none of us in this tent but who would have had to struggle from time to time with a feeling of bitterness. It's a common perplexity and one that baffles the Lord's people from time to time. I know that I have fought it often. I know my tendency has always been when I got a little bitter over something to blame the other person, "Well, so and so said this;" or "so and so did this" or "they despise me and my life" and so on, and other things makes us bitter.

Like one man said to me, "I am bitter, I know I'm bitter," but he said, "I have a right to be bitter," and I said, "No, you don't have a right to be bitter, you have a reason alright," because he had been mistreated. There was no question about that, but I said, "You don't have a right to be bitter," and I quoted this verse to him, this 15th verse of Hebrews 12 where Paul tells us that bitterness comes when we fail to make use of the **grace** of God. In other words, if I allow bitterness to come into my soul, it's not because of what the other person has said or done its just because I haven't availed myself of the **grace** of God to offset it.

I can understand in the light of this, why Paul at the termination of many of his Epistles prayed that **grace** of the Lord Jesus would be with his people. I can understand especially why at the end of some of these Epistles he wrote "the **grace** of our Lord, Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Sometimes there are things like that can distress us, but folks if you and I would just avail ourselves of the **grace** of God and the full provision that comes to us through that **grace** then nothing is going to remove us from His ever lasting and eternal and heavenly Kingdom.

Now it's in the 4th chapter and 16th verse that he encourages us to come boldly unto the **Throne of Grace**. Do you know why this **Throne** is called the **Throne of Grace**? Because upon this **Throne** sits the God of all **grace**. There are certain things that God holds the monopoly over—there are certain things that God holds in the hollow of His own hand—and He only gives it to His own people. You read in one place that He is the God of all comfort. And that means that every ounce of comfort that comes into the souls of God's people comes from God, because He is the God of all comfort.

Peter also mentioned that He is the God of all **grace**, and that means that every bit of **grace** that is placed at your disposal and mine comes from God and it comes through the avenue of this **Throne**. That's the reason why it's referred to as the **Throne of Grace**, because upon that **Throne** sits the God of all **grace**, and I thank God for that this afternoon. He said that there are two things waiting for us at the **Throne of Grace**, mercy and **grace**. In other words, every time you and I approach the **Throne of Grace**, if we come there in the right spirit, we'll find there mercy to cover the past and **grace** to do better in the future. Isn't that a wonderful combination? Now he said in this verse, "let us therefore come boldly unto the **Throne of Grace**."

There is another verse in this Book of Hebrews where he said that word "boldly." It's in the 13th chapter and the 6th verse where he said "so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper and I'll not fear what man can do unto me." Some people are afraid of what others will say about them but Paul went beyond that even and he said, "so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what men shall do unto me." In other words, if I come boldly unto the **Throne of Grace** and avail myself of the help that God gives me there, then I can turn around and face the world and boldly say now the Lord is my helper, I've been to the **Throne of Grace**, and I have availed myself of that help and now I'm equipped to face the foe; and I can look into the face of the enemy and boldly say, "now the Lord is my helper and I don't care what you say or do about it."

I believe this is the same thought that Solomon had in the book of Proverbs when he said, "the righteous are as bold as a lion..." What is it that makes a lion bold? Is it not the realization of the fact that God has endowed him with power that is greater than anything that can arise against him? That lion has no knowledge of what he is going to meet around the next bend of the jungle trail and at the same time he doesn't care, because he knows that come what may, God has endowed me with a power that is greater than anything that can rise up against me. That is why he lifts his head and roars in defiance and walks boldly down the trail.

Well, you understand in the light of that, then, can you not, what Solomon meant when he said the righteous are as bold as a lion? That when you and I come boldly to the **Throne of Grace** and avail ourselves of the full provision that He has given us through His **grace**, then we can look into the future, not knowing what we might meet around the next bend of the jungle trail but with the assurance in our hearts that, come what may, God has endowed me now with a power that is greater than anything that can rise up against me. And, that power is also greater than the last enemy which is death. It enables a child of God to not only boldly face every enemy and experience along the way, but when it comes to the last enemy which is death, they can boldly and triumphantly face it also with the full assurance of faith in their hearts that God has endowed me with a power that is stronger than death itself. When he said let us come boldly unto the **Throne of Grace** he didn't mean come presumptuously or arrogantly or anything like that.

I think that you folks are familiar enough with the Old Testament stories and the history we have of the ungodly kings to know that if a person came into the presence of their king uninvited, they went in fear and trembling because they knew they took their life in their hands. If you want an example of that, you'll find it in the book of Esther where Queen Esther went in this day into the presence of the king to make intercession for her people. Now she was the Queen and the King loved her and she knew that, but at the same time

she knew that King and she knew that his pride was very sensitive and that if anyone presumed to walk into his presence uninvited, if it met with his displeasure, he would have them beheaded right on the scene. Even though she was Queen and even though she knew the King loved her, she knew she was taking her life in her hands when she went before that **Throne** to make a petition that was so desperately needed, and she said "well, if I perish, I perish." "If I don't do something about it I'm going to perish, if I do perish, well, what's the difference—I'm going to perish one way or the other." But she saw one ray of hope, of going in before that King with her petition. I'll tell you, folks, that poor woman went in there with fear and trembling!

The Lord is not going to put us to death for presuming to come into His Presence. There's nothing that would please the Lord more, there's nothing that will please our King more than that you and I came before the **Throne of Grace** many times a day. No matter how often we come, it thrills Him to think that we're coming to the place where He can give us the sufficient **grace**, and therefore, when you and I go to pray, when we go to make our petitions that are so vitally necessary concerning our future, when we go there, it's nice to know that we're going into a place where we're welcome and where we'll meet the smile and approval of our King.

We were reading a little dictionary this year that contained the origin of some of the Bible words and how they were first used, what they first meant, and it mentioned a closet. The closet that Jesus referred to where His people went in there to pray, to go into the closet and shut the door and to pray to your Father which is in secret. I've always thought of this closet as just a secluded room. A secluded room where everything was shut out. But, when I found out how this word, closet was used originally, it added even more lustre to the picture.

It says that this word closet was first of all applied to a room in which kings held secret meetings. And isn't that what happens when you and I go into the closet to pray. Isn't that what happens when you and I come boldly unto the **Throne of Grace**, which is the place of prayer? We enter a secret meeting with our King, and there we can pour out our hearts to Him and there He pours out His Heart to us and we enjoy that intimate, hearty, close fellowship that only God and His people know.

I would just like to think that as we leave this convention we'd all recognize the fact that in God's house there's **grace** and to spare. That there will not be an experience that we will face or a separation that we will be asked to make, or an effort that will be asked to be put forth, but what the Lord will say to us, "Now don't be panicky, my **grace** is sufficient for thee." And may God find us this coming year faithfully and boldly and frequently coming to the **Throne of Grace** where we can find mercy to cover the past and **grace** to take care of the future.

I wonder can any of you tell me what the closing statement of the Bible is? It reads: "The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." This was at the conclusion of what John had seen of the new heaven and the new earth. All God has in store for His people to enjoy throughout the countless ages of eternity. And He knew if they would just avail themselves of the **grace** of God that can help us—they'll be sure to be there. And I hope, whether in life or in death, the **grace** of God will mean more to us this coming year than ever.

The Spirit Makes the Difference
By Howard Mooney
1980 Pukekohe, New Zealand Convention

Sometimes people ask, what is the main difference between your church and the other churches?

I used to start off by telling them of the difference in the ministry. It is a big difference, and then I would tell them the difference in the worship which is a big difference, and then I would tell them of the worship in the fellowship, which is a big difference. I began by telling them, the difference is the spirit that God has given to His people. A spirit that is revolutionary different from any other spirit in the religious world and it is this spirit that has produced a miracle spirit. It is His spirit that has produced this miracle we enjoy, we worship!

Before we go into the letter to the Ephesians, I would like to mention two statements he made. He introduced the work of the spirit in Isaiah 4:4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. He said, it is a spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. It is a spirit of judgment because it shows us what to do and it is a spirit of burning because it gives us a burning desire to do it. That is a secret of the workmanship of God. When Paul later on wrote to the Philippian Christians, he said, it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure, or, it is God who worketh a willingness to do His good pleasure in your heart.

One minister said to us; I cannot understand it, but your people enjoy doing what we cannot force our people to do. We told him, no power on earth could force people to do this, and we are glad God does not force His people to do it. But He gives us His spirit, and in that spirit is willingness to do His good pleasure, the spirit of His Son. He said, I delight to do Thy will oh my God, so the spirit that God gives to His people, is the spirit of judgment that helps us to understand the truth and what to do, but it is also the spirit of. Burning because it gives us a burning desire to do it.

32nd Chapter of Isaiah speaks of the lives being empty and desolate like a waste, a howling wilderness until the spirit be poured out from above and then a tremendous change took place, and the wilderness became a paradise and the land that was wasted became like the Garden of Eden. But that only happened because the spirit was poured out from above. A person could have cultivated that wilderness ground naturally speaking for all you are worth, but it would not have done one bit of good if it were not for something that God gives from above. The same is so with us today. It is a spirit that God poured out upon us from above that changed our lives from

a lonely waste, a howling wilderness into the paradise of God that we are enjoying today. That verse is found in chap. 42:13 of the book of Isaiah 42:13, The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. It is in Ephesians that Paul spoke of the seal of the spirit.

Ephesians 1:13. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. When they had believed, God sealed them with a promise; He had promised them from the beginning of the Old Testament. He was not referring in the sense of sealing an envelope, but he was speaking here of a king's seal stamped on a document. When people saw that document with the king's seal upon it, it gave them the assurance that this had the assurance of the king upon it and the authority of the king behind it. Paul said that this spirit that God gave to us when we first professed and accepted Jesus, was just like God's seal, it was an indication to the world and to us ourselves, that God had put His approval on us and accepted us among the beloved.

This took place in a very dramatic manner on the day of Pentecost. The reason why it took place in such a very dramatic manner was that it had been prophesied that it would, and the people accepted it. The people understood from the Old Testament scripture that the promised Holy Spirit would be given in this dramatic manner on the first Pentecost after Calvary. When Calvary took place, and this Pentecost took place, the historians say the city was filled with the glow of excitement and the temple courts were filled with the people who worshiped there, and they thought God will pour out His spirit upon us. They knew that whoever the spirit was poured out upon, God would accept that group. The people felt because of that, God would put His seal of approval on the people in the temple courts. The Pharisees felt the same way, and the Sadducees and the others felt the same way about it, and their places of worship were filled to overflowing that day, and to leave any doubt out of the picture for ever, God caused the spirit to come like a hurricane, a mighty rushing wind. They could hear it before it got there and after it left, and that spirit, that wind, roared right over the heads of those people in the temple courts, and it left them speechless, and it roared right over the roofs of the 420 Synagogues in Jerusalem and left them gasping, realizing it has left us by, and the hurricane came and settled on a home where the Christians were having their Sunday morning meeting, and it gave assurance to those on the inside as well as the outside. It says the spirit came and filled the house wherein they were speaking.

We see how God proved in this dramatic manner that He had put His seal of approval on this way of worship. These people who were meeting there in that Sunday morning meeting. Not only did He put His seal of approval on the way in which they were worshiping, but He also put His seal of approval upon the day in which they were worshiping. Sunday morning. Pentecost means 50. It was the 50th day after the first sheaves were gathered in and they were to remember the seven Sabbaths after that, and on the 50th day, the day after the 7th Sabbath, was the day of Pentecost, that is why it was called Pentecost, or the 50th day. It was on the 50th day, or the first day of the week, the day after the 7th Sabbath, that the Christians were coming together having their Sunday morning meeting, 9 O'clock in the morning, when God put His seal of approval on that group that day. God not only put His seal upon the people that day, He put His approval on the way in which they were worshiping, and on the day on which they were worshiping, Sunday morning.

I do not know if you have any Sabbath keepers in New Zealand. We have several groups in America; they feel you should keep the old Jewish Sabbath. One of their challenging statements is that you cannot show me one place where God put His approval on a Sunday service. And we are glad to take them right back to this event at Pentecost, that this was a Sunday morning meeting, 9 O'clock in the morning, on the first day of the week, that God poured out His seal of approval. Not merely upon the way in which they were worshiping, but also upon the day in which they were worshiping.

Maybe you would like to keep that in mind, because in future days you may come in contact with these Sabbath worshipers. We can take them right back to this great and notable event and show them that place there. When Joel spoke of it, he said, "The great and terrible day of the Lord." When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost he told the people, what we are doing is the fulfillment of what Joel has prophesied. He spoke of it as the great and notable day of the Lord. He wasn't misquoting the scripture. For the religious people, it was a dreadful day. A terrible day. It had awakened them to the fact that they had missed everything. To them it was one of the most terrible experiences they had ever gone through, to realize that; with all our zeal and sacrifice, we are left outside of the will of God. It was a great and terrible day for them. To the Lord's people it was a great and notable day. That was a day they never forgot. A day God proved to everybody.

This is the way that the Lord has blessed and it was prophesied right back in the book of Isaiah. What took place then was only for that occasion and proved that point, so it was never repeated. The point remains, that when mankind, down through the ages since then, obeyed the Gospel and submitted to God's will, God put the same spirit and same seal of approval upon them individually that He did upon this situation collectively, so that you and I look back upon a great and notable day in our experience. That day when we obeyed the gospel, and God put that seal of approval upon us by giving us that Holy Spirit of Promise.

The 17th day of June is a great and notable day for me. Because it was on the 17th day of June 1917 at 3.30 in the afternoon that I stood on my feet and professed and was conscious before I left the meeting that day, that God had put His seal of approval upon this young life of mine. That is a great and notable day in my experience. There isn't a one of us in this meeting this morning who are naming the name of Christ, but you will have known that great and notable day. When you gave up struggling and believed and obeyed, and God sealed you with that Holy Spirit He promised to give to His people, His seal of approval, He promised from way back, from the beginning of time, not only is this promise of God His seal of approval, but it is 14 verses of this chapter. He said, this Spirit of God that we have received, it is the earnest of our inheritance. The foretaste. The down-payment, the beginning. A something we would continue to enjoy through all eternity.

I would like for a few moments this morning, if God gives me the help to give it, I would like to impress upon you the importance of this great inheritance to which you have been called, because if we can just give you a greater understanding of the greatness of this thing, nothing will be able to separate us from it, or to hinder us from putting our best into it.

What we have today, what we have received by the Spirit of God coming into our life, and that is why I want to speak about these statements, that emphasize that. What we have received is too good to be true. Wonderful though it is, it is just the beginning of something that will take all of Eternity for us to appreciate the full content of it, and that is not my talking. That is mentioned in the 2nd chapter of this letter. It will take all the ages for us to show the exceeding greatness of His grace and all that has been provided for us. What we have today is the riches of His grace. It will take all the ages to come, to show to us all the exceeding riches of His grace. It is something that we begin to measure in this life. It will take all the ages to come to show us or to enjoy the fullest breadth of it.

There are three exceeding things mentioned in this letter that I may mention right now in passing. Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. There is the exceeding greatness of His power that is mentioned in v.19 and 20 of the 1st chap. The same power that God used to raise Lazarus from the dead, the exceeding greatness of that power. In Chap 3 Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

He speaks of the exceeding satisfaction. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. That is exceeding satisfaction. Exceeding reward that will be ours to enjoy throughout the endless ages of eternity. When Paul used that word exceedingly in these instances, he wasn't referring that this exceeds what the world has to offer. The world cannot come in a million miles of what you are enjoying in Christ today. It never could, and it never will.

What he was referring to was not exceeding the things the world has to offer, this is a foregone conclusion. But he meant this exceeds everything you expect in this life. Isn't that true? When you first gave your life to God, you never expected to get from the lavish hand of God what God intended you should have. It becomes infinitely better with the passing of time. It will take us all the ages to come, to enjoy the full benefit of it. It exceeds our fondest expectation; it is something away beyond what we would think. It is the only thing in the world that turns out to be better than you expect. That statement covers everything. This is the only thing in the world that turns out to be better than we expect. It exceeds our fondest expectation.

Just to help you grasp the full meaning of this, we have received the down-payment. Joshua, when he came to the end of his life, after walking with God for 64 years, and entering deeply into his inheritance, but after walking with God for 64 years, he said to the people, I am going this day the way of all the earth. This is the day he died, and he said, you know in all of your souls and all of your hearts that not one thing has failed of all the good things that the Lord spake concerning you. All had come to pass and not one thing had failed thereof. Isn't that a wonderful testimony to give at the end of 64 years of close fellowship with God? Not one thing had failed of all that God had promised to do. That is found in Chap 23:14 and chap 24:30. Joshua died that day like he said he would, and when he died, they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah. Can you grasp the magnitude of that this morning my brother, my sister? For 64 years he had been enjoying the abundance of his inheritance, and yet when he died, he was buried just inside the border. It would take all of eternity for him to enjoy the rest of it.

Timnathserah, means a portion of the remainder, the place where he was buried. For 64 years he had been enjoying to the full a portion of this thing, the earnest of his inheritance, but it would take all of eternity to enjoy the remainder. I do not care how long you have been professing, I do not care how deeply you have entered into this thing, the fact remains that when you die, you will just be inside the border. It is so far beyond human comprehension, that when you die, regardless of how many years you have put into it, you will find yourself just inside the border. It will take all of eternity for God to show you the rest of your inheritance, but while we are waiting for the rest to take place, God has given us the earnest to enjoy now, and a full assurance to your heart and mine, that the rest will be ours when the time comes for God to share it with us.

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. He speaks of the access of his spirit. He mentioned that through Him we have access by one spirit unto the Father. The access of the spirit. I like to think of this in the term of a ticket. If you were going to some public function that required a ticket to get in, and you came to the man at the door, he wouldn't ask you who you are, or what you are, he will say, where is your ticket. That is what will get you in. If this isn't too crude an illustration, that is what the Holy Spirit is to you and to me, it is that something that gives us access to the Father, and as many times a day as we wish, we can go into the presence of the Father, and there find something that is found no place else apart from in His presence. I do not have access to the Father today because of who I am or what I am by nature.

That is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. There is nothing about our natural make-up that would have given us access to the Father that would have given us access to Him as His children. The spirit that He has given us, gives us access to His presence. If you have never done so, I would encourage you to make a study of the things that are found only in His presence. No place else are they found other than in His presence. I will give you a couple of them. Maybe that will intrigue you to look up the others when time comes. The Lord said to Moses, Ex 33:14, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. That is found in no place else but in His presence. Isaiah said, It is not in the stormy world. The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, driven back and forth by the tides of time. Situations they cannot control. There is no rest for the wicked. Always cooking up something and bored. Jesus said, You come unto me, and I will give you rest. In all the religiosity they had, they never found the rest that was found in His presence. The

Psalmist said, In thy presence is fullness of joy. Where else could you find it? We read of the times of refreshing together in the presence of the Lord. We read in Hebrews, Jesus is now in the presence of God making intercession for us through His blood.

If you would like to study an interesting subject, I would encourage you to look up the different places in the Bible where it speaks of these things that are found only in God's presence, and think that every day of your life. As many times during the day as I wish I can go into His presence and lavishly enjoy all those wonderful things that are only found there, because I have His spirit and His spirit is what gives me access to it. There are times when I have gone into the room and got down on my knees beside my bed and I have never said a word and I have never heard a word. There are some moments that cannot be put into words. There are times when I have gone into the room and got down on my knees intending to pray and I was so conscious of the closeness of the Lord's presence that the atmosphere was too sacred to speak and some of those moments are moments that you wish would never end.

There is something about being in the presence of certain people means much to you and you do not have to say much. Just to be in their presence means so much to you. In time of need I go into His presence, but oftentimes when I am not in need I go into His presence and get down on my knees and just in silence enjoy the sweetness of fellowship and the spirit of peace and joy and what I am talking about is something you have experienced time and time again yourself, but let us keep the thought in mind that it is only the spirit that gives us access into this glorious presence.

Our old brother Willie Jamieson, whom some of you have known, who has now gone into eternity, he used to say that the greatest mistake that any child of God would make would be in taking credit for what you have in Christ. He said this is the gift of God. We wouldn't want to think of just what I am and because of the life I may have lived. It is the spirit. It is the spirit that God gave us the day we obeyed the gospel, and He put the seal of His approval upon us. That is the access that enables us to enter into His presence and there, in His presence, receive the sweetest fellowship that the human heart could ever know, and from His presence receive things that are found absolutely in no other place apart from in His presence.

Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. v:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; v:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, v:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. **Unity of the spirit. The spirit that brings about this wonderful unity and fellowship among God's people. He speaks about the unity of the spirit and of the unity of the faith. They had all put their faith in the same God and God had given them all the same spirit and it was a double bond that had united them in Christ.**

This church, this miracle church to whom Paul had written this letter, was a wonderful example of the unity that only the spirit of God could bring about. I do not know of any group of people in the Bible who had more diversity of backgrounds than what these people had who made up the Church at Ephesus. When Timothy came with the gospel, the first 12 they met were men that had been baptized into John's baptism. I do not think they ever met John, because every time John baptized a person, he said, I baptize you with water, but there is one coming after me that is greater than I. He said, We have not heard of any Holy Ghost, but anyway, they had been brought to repentance. They had turned their back on what was wrong, but they hadn't found what was right until the servants of God came across their pathway and these became the nucleus of the little church of Ephesus. And there were Jews who believed too. Some were Pharisees and Sadducees and then there were some Gentiles that professed and they all had this spirit of God. The same spirit. They received the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, that spirit working amongst them broke down the middle line of partition between them, it brought them into fellowship to the same Father who in turn helped them to have fellowship with each other. And now this group here, so diversely divided with such a spirit of bitterness. There never was a wall of hatred greater than the wall of hatred that existed between the Jew and Gentile. The coming of the Gospel broke down that wall between them and made them one in Christ.

Verse: 4 You who were so diverse in your background, you are all one in Christ. Now you are one body and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one body, one God and Father of you all, Who is in you all and through you all. A wonderful example of the unity of the spirit and what the spirit can bring about when men and women were under the control of that spirit. Did you ever notice three times in that letter Paul used the word together? This word together seems to be the miracle that took place at Ephesus. God has called us together, and raised us up together and made us sit in Heavenly places, so that there is a paradise of Heaven upon this earth. You are now like a building fitly framed together, you are growing up together as an holy temple in the Lord. You are like a body that is fitly joined together.

Chap. 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. He said, there is a time in the fullness of time when we will all be gathered together as one in the great family relationship. The family of God is divided today. Some have already gone to be with Christ which is far better and the rest of us are still representing the work of God upon the earth and there are probably lonely hearts in this meeting this morning because of that. One soul, probably the closest and dearest to you on earth being already taken from the scene and you rejoice in the fact they have gone to be with Christ which is much better.

In that 1st Chapter we were reading of the time of fullness when this old world is no longer needed and time on earth is no more and God will draw together His people, those who are on earth and in Heaven in Christ and all gathered together. I like to think of this great family relationship that will never end or we can use this vernacular, the great convention that will never end. There is only one thing I do not enjoy about convention. I grew up in convention. I went to my first convention in my parents arms. The highlight of the year as a boy growing up was going to convention; I always enjoyed it so much. There is one thing about convention I never enjoyed and I still do not and that is the goodbye. You have four days of fellowship together and your hearts become so warmly knit together and you say goodbye and pass your different ways and realize I will never see them again here upon this earth, and that is the part of

convention I do not enjoy. It is sometimes terrible to think of this part of convention. The 4th verse of this Chap. tells us there will be no ending, no parting.

Throughout the countless ages of eternity we can sit down and enjoy together a family relationship that will never end. This is all made possible because of the unity of the spirit, that spirit of God that has brought a unity that is found no place else on the face of the earth. That is why people ask us what is the main difference between your church and any other church, and I start right in by telling them it is the spirit, because it is the spirit that has made all these things possible that we are talking about this morning.

Chap. 5:9 The fruit of the spirit. The fruit which only the spirit of God can produce. The fruits of the spirit Love, joy, peace, etc... That is what makes our fellowship what it is. Those fruits are triumphant in our Lord Jesus. Over in the state of South Dakota at a convention, a sister worker got up on the platform and she said; For a long while I have been praying that God would give me more of the fruit of the spirit, but I finally came to the conclusion and the realization of the fact that I was praying for the wrong thing. Then I began praying that God would give me more of the spirit because the spirit is like a tree. If you have the spirit the fruit will automatically come and it cannot get fruit from any other source. The only way you can get an apple is from the apple tree. That is the only way God planned apples can be brought into this world. The fruit of the spirit only comes through the spirit of God. I would like to emphasize this in passing. There is no end to what you can possess of the spirit. God gave His spirit without measure unto Jesus. It is something that can be given to us without any limitations if we do not put the limitations on it ourselves. The more we possess, the more of the fruit of the spirit is going to glow forth to make glad the hearts of others.

When Jesus was talking to the people at the Jewish feasts. He said; If anyone thirsts, let him come unto me and drink. This is the promise of the scripture. Out of Him shall flow rivers of water. In other words, you come to Him and drink of the spirit and that will be magnified to such an extent, when you pour out the benefit to others, it is like a river of water pouring forth bringing wonderful flavor with it. Can you think of a greater mission or privilege that wherever you go, in your home, in place of business, in your fellowship meeting, wherever you go, to be able to bring the fruit of the spirit within the reach of needy people. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. It is all a product of the spirit and Jesus tells us in Luke 11, God gives that spirit, renews that spirit every day to those who take time to pray for it. It was given to us when we accepted the gospel. Jesus said, you can get an additional supply every day by praying for it. Going to the Father and asking Him for the benefit of it. Although the outward man perish, that inward man is renewed day by day just as we were hearing. There is no limit to what God can give to us as far as the spirit is concerned. The only limitation is what we might put upon it ourselves. If you would like to have a little more of the spirit, you just pray and God will give you a little more of the spirit itself. The fruit will automatically come.

May I just speak a few words again to our old folks in this meeting, before we separate. As we mentioned yesterday, there comes a time in the experience of older folks that you feel you cannot do much, cannot do anything anymore. Maybe you cannot dry dishes and sweep the floor or mow the lawn any more, maybe you cannot do things like that anymore, but you can still produce the fruit of the spirit. Remember that there is nothing to hinder you from producing the fruit of the spirit, even though your outward man is perishing and becoming more feeble. Do you think for a single minute that you are on limited rations if you can bring more of the spirit to that home where you are living? If you can bring more of the fruit of the spirit into the Sunday morning meeting, do you think you are on limited activity? You are not. The scripture says the righteous person is like a palm tree they bring forth fruit in old age and they are fat and flourishing. That is a peculiarity of the palm tree. The other trees pass their zenith when it comes to bearing. They bear until they reach their particular years, and they then face a decline. But not a palm tree. Every year of its life, the palm tree gets better and gives more fruit. A palm tree lasts 100 to 125 years and the best fruit the tree produces is produced at the end of its life. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. They will bring forth fruit in old age. It is not a case of passing the peak of your performance and then settling down into a decline. Not so.

That is why the older people like we said yesterday, represent an inspiration to us coming on, because in their lives there is a fruit produced, there is something existing there and it encourages us younger ones to attain to it too. Do not be discouraged by the fact that you cannot dry dishes or sweep the floor or mow the lawn or drive the car any more. Remember, you can still produce the best fruit you ever produced and that is the thing that contributes to the welfare of the Kingdom and the hope of a perishing world. It is wonderful God has planned it that way, so that no child of God passes the zenith of their usefulness.

6th Chap. We read of the army. The good soldiers of Jesus Christ equipped with weapons of war, enabling us to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand in victory. He speaks of the helmet to protect the mind and the breastplate the heart and shoes to protect the feet and the shield of faith which is the auxiliary weapon to protect us from various angles and taking the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and may I emphasize in closing this meeting, that the word of God, it is the only sword that the spirit uses. That is all that is necessary. We have everything in the Word of God to win the battle.

When Jesus faced Satan in the wilderness and faced those temptations there, all that He needed was the sword of the spirit, the word of God to put Satan to flight. But the folks here, many of you will remember our old brother Stanley Watchorn. He came from your field and he was a tremendous help to us in our early years of professing and established my early years in the work. He was a wonderful help to me because of the fatherly help he gave to us young workers. One day I was visiting a convention in Europe like this, and two young brother workers came up and joined the circle. In the course of conversation they said, Uncle Stan, can you tell me of any encyclopedia or Bible Dictionary or anything that would help us understanding the Bible? And Stan looked at me with those kindly eyes that some of you may remember and he said, Son, the only help I have ever understood in understanding the Bible is a bended knee. He said, You get down beside your bed with your Bible open before you and God will give you things you will never understand in any other book. You can get some historical facts or learn about the customs of the land, that is all right, but if you want to get the food for your soul, and food for the souls of your brethren, the only way you can get it is on the bended knee.

You get it on your knees at your bedside and you open your Bible before you and God will give you things you will never find in any other book and that is the eternal truth. What you have been hearing from this platform the last meetings you have had together are things that are not heard from any other book. They have only come from Gods word on a bended knee. Remember the sword of the spirit is the Word of God. That is what it says, the sword of the spirit is the Word of God. That is the only sword the spirit of God uses and it is the only sword the spirit gives. He can overcome the wiles of Satan and set at liberty the captives.

Everything is provided for us in this word of God and the Spirit of God is there to help us to get the benefit from it. I hope we will appreciate the fact that this Spirit of God that works so triumphantly and brought about the wonderful results of the people of Ephesus, what happened to them happens to us also. Our only desire, our only purpose is that we will avail ourselves more of this, so that more of this wonderful word can be accomplished in our lives and I pray that this may be so.

Howard Leslie Mooney

Born: June 23, 1907 Chesaw, Washington USA

Died: January 21, 1999 Portland, Oregon USA

Howard and Rose made their choice in the same home meeting in their parents' home on June 17, 1917 when Howard was 9 years old. They were both baptized in July that same year.

The Perfect Way – Not an Organization
By Howard Mooney
1970 Great Falls Special Meeting

Isaiah 5, Will you please open your Bibles to Isaiah 5:1 "Now I sing to my well- beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress there; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes."

I would like to tell you why this vineyard brought forth wild grapes, but first I would like to talk about the greatness of the vineyard.

It was the church, God's people. If there is any question, read verse 7. I suppose you are conscious of the fact that he is speaking about the perfection of the church. When David was speaking about the church, he said, "As for God, His way is perfect." You are reading in these verses about God's perfect way. The Lord asks, "What more could I have done?" The God of perfection doing everything He could to produce a perfect fellowship. The reason it was not fruitful wasn't the fault of the church. If you are an unfruitful person, or if I am, it isn't the fault of God's way. This is still God's perfect way, just as perfect as it ever was. The fault lies in the error of the vines within the vineyard.

This vineyard was the workmanship of God. Salvation has always been the workmanship of God. Paul said, "Ye are His workmanship." **One of the basic differences between the true and false religion in the Bible is: In the false religion, they are talking about what they are doing for the Lord. That is always the mark of false religion. The true worshippers were speaking about what God had done for them.** In this chapter you read of people for whom God had done great things. One of the reasons the church existed without an organization is because it is God's workmanship, and today it is still God's workmanship.

When we tell people we have a world-wide fellowship and yet no organization, no registered name, no officers, no earthly headquarters, and yet we are held together as one compact, loving family, people say, "That's impossible." Jesus agreed with this, "With men it is impossible, but with God All things are possible." One of the reasons God planned an impossible fellowship is that men and women could see the hand of God in the picture. When you see this, there is no question that God is still living.

We often tell people that if we were an organization and had an earthly headquarters, we would have no proof to give to the world that there is a God or that God is with us. The proof of that statement is that the unions and the international business clubs function on that basis. If we had an organization and a registered name and a board of directors and an earthly headquarters, we would have no more proof than they have, that there is a God.

The first thing it tells us was that God chose the site of the vineyard. In California where I had the privilege of laboring, there is a large vineyard that covers hundreds and hundreds of acres. According to the brochure they put out, the directors of this colony looked for two years to find a suitable place for this vineyard. The soil content, climatic conditions, and the humidity had to be just right. They didn't stop looking until they found the place where those vines would have every possible chance.

Even before the foundation of the world, God was concerned that you and I would have the proper chance. When He planned this fellowship, He planned a fellowship where every individual would have the best possible chance to be fruitful. If we are in this meeting unfruitful, it isn't God's fault.

When Paul was writing, he said this ground we are rooted in is love. The reason God planned it so is that the first fruit God expects is love. This would be the trademark of His people. The next thing it tells us is that the Lord put a protection around it. **That fence is not a fence of restriction. If you don't remember anything else, please remember that that fence was not a fence of restriction. It is a fence of protection.** When I was a teenager having my teenage struggle, I sometimes looked upon God's protection as a restriction. I used to wish that the wall wasn't there, that God wouldn't put a barrier around His people. God's people are not a restricted people. We are a protected people. I thank God for the protection that He has put around our lives.

Has your attention ever been called to the fact that the world is referred to in the Bible as a jungle? It is a case of dog eat dog. That is why the Devil is referred to as a roaring lion, Herod as an old fox. Natural brute beasts. The reason for these illustrations is to remind us that this world is a jungle. Cannot we be thankful that God has put a wall of separation between us and the jungle?

The next thing He gathered out the stones. They were gathered out before a single vine was planted. They would have been a hindrance. When I look into the religious world that surrounded Jesus, a world with all its financial and social problems (I read about those conditions existing in the days of Jesus in the religious world) and then I look at the fellowship of Jesus and His disciples and I see that there are none of those stones there. Those are huge stones that are a hindrance even in the religious world around us today. This was to be a perfect way in which there would be no financial, no social, no business problems, and other problems that plague the organizations of mankind.

The question arises: Here in a perfect vineyard under the care of a perfect husbandman – Why then did these vines bring forth wild grapes instead of the fruit of the Spirit?

Down in this part of California I told you about, we had a friend who had a large vineyard. It had been in the family for generations. I asked him what would cause these vines to bring forth wild grapes. He said, "There is one reason", and after reading this chapter, I feel this is the reason; lack of pruning.

These vines are all started with wild roots. They take a root of the wild grape, and after it gets a couple of years old, they cut off the natural branches and graft in the new variety that they want that vine to produce. Incidentally, I don't know of any illustration that helps me to understand better what it means to be born again. "Receiving....the engrafted word." When you listened to the Gospel, the first thing the Lord did was to cut off your old desires, opinions, ideas, and then He engrafted the love and Spirit of God and the mind and nature of His son. If we are what we should be, all of our energy is going to the support of this new life.

There is one thing in the picture you have to look out for: that wild root has a tendency to put out little suckers that will take over again, just like our human nature. It just puts out a little innocent-looking sucker to start with, but unless you nip it in the bud, it soon becomes a branch.

He spoke of the fact that He put a tower in the midst. That was so He would be near the vines. He could keep His eye on every vine in that vineyard and he was ready to meet any need. His eye is upon us by day and by night. "God is in the midst of her and He will help her right early." The reason He is so anxious to be in the midst of His people is because He looks for the needs of His people, and is right there to help them.

I want you to notice in this chapter that there are six woes mentioned here. I believe you will agree with me that these six woes are just six natural tendencies of branches that had never been pruned back. They probably didn't see the danger. Ver. 8 "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." This is a natural tendency to get ahead in the world. It is alright if it is controlled. There is nothing wrong with a person having a desire to get ahead, wanting a better home, a better car or better furniture, if you keep it under control. If you let it grow out of bounds, then all energy goes to that natural tendency and the things of God are crowded out. All that natural tendency can produce is wild grapes.

Verse 11 speaks of the natural tendency toward pleasure. You read here of some pleasure-bent people. One of the greatest human tendencies is to go out after pleasure. The reason there are so many avenues of pleasure is just because there are so many people wanting it.

Sometimes people come to us and they will ask about this pleasure or that pleasure in the world and they will say, "What is wrong with it?" We sometimes tell them there is nothing wrong in the pleasure itself, but if you don't look out, that pleasure will crowd the Lord out of your life. It will take all your time that you should spend reading and praying and visiting with God's people, the things you should be doing.

We were talking at one of the Special Meetings about a study we had a few years ago with our young folks in California. We had talked together about the evils in the Bible. I was electrified myself before the study was over, because we discovered that there were far more good evils mentioned in the Bible than bad evils. Everyone can see the danger of the bad evil – drinking, and gambling, and carousing – anyone can see the danger of a bad evil.

But there are more good evils than bad evils. A good evil is just anything that hinders you from praying, from reading your Bible or going to meeting or writing that letter you should be writing, and you are too busy to do it. The thing that is making you too busy is a good evil. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." This time had been given them to prepare for Eternity.

I suppose we have all hung our heads when we realize that the good legitimate things of life have crowded the things of God out. Sometimes there are pleasures in the world that in themselves are harmless, but they can hinder your relationship with God, from praying, from getting ready for the Sunday morning meeting. Just like these people, it was a natural tendency that could only produce wild grapes.

Verse 18 speaks of another woe, another natural branch, natural tendencies that need to be pruned back. Verse 19 seems to refer to a natural tendency toward doubt. The world is filled with doubt because it is a natural tendency. It is the opposite from faith. Faith can crowd doubt out of the picture, but if we are not careful, doubt will crowd faith out of the picture. The world is filled with people who are doubters: they doubt the existence of God; they doubt the authenticity of the Bible: that God can do for them what He wants to do: that He can be to people what He was in olden days. Doubt is one of the fastest growing branches that is ever produced. It needs to be pruned back often because it will take over, and the things of God will be crowded out.

Verse 20 speaks of another woe, another natural tendency. This is a tendency toward compromises. In the beginning God put a world of difference between light and darkness and between good and evil, and He never intended that they should be intermingled, between sweet and bitter. I can remember just a few years ago that even out in the ungodly world, people recognized the difference between light and darkness, between good and evil, between moral and immoral. I knew people without an ounce of religion, and yet they kept a world of difference between good and evil. We are seeing today the product of the natural tendency. There is no distinction between light and darkness, between good and evil, between bitter and sweet. The world has compromised. Every day the papers are filled with suicides, homicides, and scandal, the fruits people bring on themselves that haven't recognized the natural barrier.

One of the natural tendencies we have to fight against is the tendency to be like the world. You know what light is – in Jesus was light. Anything contrary to what Jesus lived and taught is darkness. Are you keeping that separation in the picture or are you yielding to the natural tendency until there is hardly any distinction between light and darkness? God isn't going to do the pruning unless you are willing for it. Any tendency toward compromise will only yield wild grapes!

Verse 21 – Another natural tendency, another branch that is the product of the wild root. "Wise in their own eyes." Six things doth the Lord hate. There is something else that is an abomination: it is a proud look. Proverbs 6:16,17. A natural tendency toward pride. There is nothing more obnoxious to God than pride. God has never left any room in this fellowship for pride. There isn't a child of God in this meeting today who won't say, "I am nothing in myself; it is only by the Grace of God that I am what I am." You can't take one bit of credit for what you are enjoying. All the glory goes to the One who had mercy on us.

If you want to make an interesting study, take your concordance and look up "pride" in the Bible and the many things that are the marks and offshoots of pride. Then contrast it with "humble". These are the opposite ends of the poles. Pride is an offshoot of the old, wild root. All it can produce is wild grapes. It can sap the strength of your life to the extent that the things of God are crowded out.

Verse 22. This is the natural tendency toward dishonesty. Everybody has to fight against this. The world isn't fighting against it, and that's why we are living in a dishonest world today. Sometimes in our endeavor to meet the dishonest competition, it is easy for us to yield to that natural tendency, too. I thank God for our brethren who are dealing with a dishonest crooked world and yet keeping straight.

We had a man in California in the real estate business, and I suppose in this business you are facing crooked competition more than the average. One of our friends from out of state liked this location, and so he went to the Chamber of Commerce and asked about the possibility of locating there. The man in the office of the Chamber of Commerce said, "You go to a certain realtor and you can be sure anything that man tells you will be right." They went down and looked up this man and they found out they were brothers in Christ. We must remember that when we are living in a world of crooked competition that there is a natural tendency, that we all have to keep pruned back to meet that competition, and in the process a person could easily lose their testimony.

These six woes mentioned here are natural tendencies from the wild root that need to be pruned back. If they are not pruned back, they will take over and crowd the things of God out of a person's life. They can only bring wild grapes. I am glad we don't have to stop with that line of thought.

Isaiah 27:2,3. This is another picture of the vineyard. "In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine." No wild grapes here. It is the same workmanship of God, but the difference is that the people in this picture are willing for pruning; they were willing to cooperate with God in pruning back any natural tendencies that only brought woe into the picture. They had come to the point of fruition as a result of the divine life grafted in. They were bringing forth love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, that God expects in His people. The only difference between the two pictures is that the vines in the first one were not willing for the pruning. They couldn't see anything wrong in these things. It pays to prune off the old wild tendencies.

You have here the picture of the vineyard of red wine. I would like to tell you something about grapes: the longer a grape hangs on the vine, the richer and sweeter and fuller it becomes. It is also a tendency of the growth of the divine vine, something that grows richer and fuller and sweeter with the passing of time. In this vineyard we were speaking about, they would go out and take a sample of the grapes here and there and take them into the laboratory and test them for sugar content and if there wasn't enough sugar, they just let them hang on a little longer.

You who are older in this meeting, you know what I am talking about, don't you? You are rejoicing that you have access to something that has made your life richer and fuller and sweeter with the passing of time. One of the greatest inspirations to me is when I can look into the faces of the older brothers and sisters and see the evidence that every day their lives are becoming richer and fuller and sweeter. That is what it will be if we let the Lord of the vineyard take over. They say there is never a time the husbandman is closer to the vine than when he is pruning.

Read Revelation 14. Death is the harvest of the grapes of the children of God. This is the perfect ending to God's perfect way.

Origin of Christmas By Howard Mooney

December 25th was originally a pagan festival. It was a time in which they celebrated the birth of Sol, or the return of the Sun on its northern journey. Most of the activities associated with Christmas have been carried over from that pagan holiday. It was not until the year 354 that the Catholic Church first associated the birth of Jesus with December 25th. In so doing, they allowed the people to the

same day, and celebrated it in the same manner, only under a different name. The following on Christmas is condensed data, found in the "New Standard Encyclopaedia." It gives more of the details :

Christmas: *The festival commemorating the birth of Christ, observed in most countries on December the 25th. The term Christmas is derived from the Latin 'Christes masse' meaning Christ's mass.*

History: *In the first few centuries of Christianity, there was no uniform celebration of the birth of Christ, because the exact date was unknown. Churches variously celebrated the event on January 2, March 25, April 18, and May 20. The adoption of December 25, as the birthday of Christ, was decreed by Bishop Liberius of Rome, in 354. This date was probably chosen because it coincided with the pagan festival of the winter solstice. The Romans observed Saturnalia, the feast of their god Saturn, at that time. The Germans, Gauls, and Britons celebrated Brumalia on December 25. The Norsemen held their Yule feasts between December 25 and January 6. Many of the customs of these festivals later on became a part of Christmas.*

In the Middle Ages, the church opposed the traces of paganism, surviving in the popular Christmas customs, and counteracted by creating special Christmas masses. The church also introduced the nativity plays, manger songs, and Christmas carols. During the restoration period in England, the puritans, of New England, also forbade the celebration of Christmas. Origin of the customs: with the exception of Christmas greeting cards, which were first used in 1846, nearly all the holiday customs can be traced to a non-

Christian origin. *The Christmas tree, usually an evergreen, is derived from the Roman saturnalia, and the Norse worship trees. It was in Germany, in the sixteenth century, that the tree was first used as a symbol of Christmas. The custom was brought to England and the United States in the 19th Century. The mistletoe was the sacred plant of the druids, priests of ancient Britain Gaul. The Yule log symbolised protection against evil spirits, in the Norse festivals.*

The above information is very enlightening. It helps one to understand how misleading the modern story of Christmas really is. It also gives one a glimpse of the great bondage, brought on the world, by the traditions of men. This should help us to appreciate, more fully, the glorious liberty we have in Christ. It should help us to keep from the spirit of hysteria that grips the world at this season. It also gives us a wonderful opportunity to let our light shine. When people can see that our homes and lives are different, from those in the world around us, it assures them that we have something better to live for.

You might enjoy reading these notes, and it may answer some questions you may have. We have discussed this subject with a number of our friends and all seem to appreciate the information. In general, we have found that when our brethren learn the facts, of such things, they form their own conclusions and make their own separations. This is better than for us to lay down laws for them to abide by.

A few more facts about Christmas:

This holiday will be celebrated as the birth of Christ. Yet.....

- a. During this season, there will be more domestic violence, more alcohol-related injuries and death, more debt incurred, and more marital infidelity than at any other time of the year!
- b. Office parties soon become drinking parties, reveling, etc.
- c. And this is how men should remember the birth of Jesus?

Men are far more interested in observing their religious days (Christmas, Easter) than they are in observing the Lord's Day (Hebrews 10:25).

- a. Human memorials of Christ's birth versus Lord's memorial of His death (I Corinthians 11:23-26).
- b. Christ will only accept honor given Him in God's way – John 4:23-24.

We should be concerned with Christian's involvement in the activities of Christmas:

- a. Is the religious observance of Christ's birth authorized by God?
- b. What is the history of this religious holiday?
- c. What is the Christian to do at this time of year?
- d. What are we teaching our children about Christmas?

We want to be "the faithful" who come before God as He commands!

THE BASIS FOR THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH: MAN OR GOD?

A. The Bible does not reveal the date of Christ's birth.

1. Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:1 – Days of Herod the Great (37-4 BC) and Caesar Augustus (27 BC-14 AD).
2. Luke 2:8 – Shepherds in fields watching flocks:
 - a. Summer months.
 - b. Song of Solomon 2:11 – Winter marked by cold and rain.
 - c. December is not "the time of Christ's birth!"

Human speculation over date:

- a. Clement of Alexandria – November 18, 3 BC. / May 20.

- b. Hippolytus – January 2, March 25 or April 2, finally December 25.
- c. Others – January 6; March 28; April 18 or 19; Every month!
- d. *"No sufficient data, however, exists for the determination of the month or day of the event"* – (The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Reprint 1977, III:47).

God would have told us if He had wanted us to know! (Deuteronomy 9:29)

B. There is no Biblical authorization for the celebration of Christ's birth.

1. Historical record does not authorize celebration of the event!
 - a. Baptism of Jesus; Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension.....
 - b. Silence of Bible must be respected by men!
 - c. The religious celebration of Christ's birth is based upon human authority, not divine authority – Matthew 21:23; II Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 3:17; II John 9-11; Galatians 1:8-9.

THE ORIGIN OF CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A. Definition of "Christmas" – "Mass of Christ."

1. Catholicism – Celebration of the birth of Christ by a special mass.
2. This festival created to counter pagan festivals:
 - a. Roman Saturnalia (December 17-24) – Honored Saturnus, a pagan god. A time of gluttony and licentiousness.
 - b. Roman feast of Mithrand, the Sun god (December 25).

B. Clearly, the festival of the birth of Christ began in post-Apostolic times.

1. Encyclopedia Of Religion & Ethics, III: 601 – *"There is no evidence of the existence of a Feast of the Nativity before the 4th century."*
2. Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, III:47 – *"There is no historical evidence that our Lord's birthday was celebrated during the apostolic or early post-apostolic times."*
3. How December 25 was selected for celebrating Christ's birth:
 - a. Liberius, Bishop of Rome, declared Dec. 25 celebrated as Christ's birthday in 354 AD.
 - b. *"There can be little doubt that the Church was anxious to distract the attention of Christians from the old heathen feast days by celebrating Christian festivals on the same days"* (Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics, III: 607).
 - c. *"The indications are, that the Church in this way grasped the opportunity to turn the people away from a purely pagan observance of the winter solstice to a day of adoration of Christ the Lord"* (Collier's Encyclopedia).
4. The observance of Christ's birth began in Catholicism and paganism, not Christianity!
5. *"Human in its origin, arbitrary and irrelevant in its time, and Pagan in its ceremonies, it clearly has no claims whatever upon the true Christian"* (W.K. Pendleton, Millennial Harbinger, 1848, p.22).

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN TO DO?

A. He cannot participate in the religious additions of men – II John 9-11. 1. II John 9-11 – Breaks fellowship with God; Fellowships errors of men.

2. Galatians 4:8-11 – Religious days of OT wrong to observe...What of those started by men in 4th century?!
3. II Corinthians 6:14 – Don't be forced into adding to God's will for your life!

B. Use the opportunities of the season to explain why you do not celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Christ – Matthew 5:13-16 (verses 11-12).

1. Of school activities, work events, neighbors.
2. People are surprised, but generally respectful of your convictions. But, you must live by your convictions regardless of how others react.....do not compromise your faith!

C. A Christian can observe portions of the Christmas holiday non-religiously.

1. Many things which may carry religious meaning can be practiced non-religiously:
 - a. Circumcision – Acts 16:1-3.
 - b. Washing hands; Eating meats sacrificed to idols, etc.
 2. Romans 14:5,23 – Without violating God's authority or one's conscience!
 - a. Festive, joyous season of goodwill, exchanging gifts, visits, helping the needy, many seasonal traditions which have no inherent religious significance.
 - b. Galatians 6:10 – Of course, these should be everyday attitudes and actions!
3. Christmas can be observed non-religiously, even though some will be observing it religiously!

CONCLUSION:

1. The basis for observing Christmas as the birth of Christ is man's religious authority (Catholicism and paganism). It started centuries after the time of Christ. It is not commanded in anyway in the New Testament.
2. While we fully believe in the virgin birth of Christ and thank God for it, God has not authorized us to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and to do so is a violation of His holy will! (Colossians 3:17; Galatians 1:8-9)
3. Let us truly be faithful to Christ this holiday season, and every day of the year!

THE ORIGIN OF GOD'S WAY

By Howard Mooney

The following verses refer to the origin of God's way. They tell us how it began, and where it began, and when it began. It is comforting to know that God planned this way of salvation in Heaven, in every detail, before the world was created. It was typified and foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and it was revealed in all of its beauty in the ministry of Jesus, Luke 16:16. Everything that God planned and promised in the Old Testament, he fulfilled to the very letter in the life and teaching of Jesus, John 1:4.

John 17:5 tells of the glory that Jesus had with the Father **before the world was**. He was now looking forward to His return to the Father to enjoy the continuation of that glory.

John 17:24 refers to the love that existed between God and his Son **before the foundation of the world**. It was out of this background of love that the Truth was planned. It is no wonder that it is a way of love because it was planned in the heart of God, and God is love, 1 John 4:16.

2 Tim. 1:9 tells of the purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began**. This purpose is defined in Rom. 8:28-29. At the same time God provided the necessary grace which would enable us to fit into that purpose.

Titus 1:2 speaks of the hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie, promised **before the world began**. Jesus defines eternal life in John 17:3. Jesus defined this eternal life in John 17:3. Eternal Life is that wonderful blessing which is promised us through the gospel. This thought is also emphasized in 1 John 2:25; 5:11.

1 Peter 1:18-20 portrays the wonderful picture of redemption, which was provided through the blood of Jesus, and which was foreordained **before the foundation of the world**. This is the blood of the everlasting covenant, Hebrews 13:20, which makes possible the assurance given in Ephesians 1:7.

Matt. 25:34 pictures the eternal side of the Kingdom which was prepared for us **from the foundation of the world**. Jesus in Luke 22:28-30 gave us a clear picture of the fellowship we will enjoy together at that time.

The above verses assure us that salvation was not an 'after-thought' with God. It was not a reconstruction program necessitated because Adam and Eve had sinned. Before man was ever created and placed on the earth, God had his way of salvation planned in every detail. Our source of rejoicing today lies in the fact that God's way is still working in our midst, in all of its entirety. How fortunate we are to be a part of a way that began in eternity and that will continue on throughout all the countless ages of eternity.

TTT Editor's comment:

Summarized, Mooney's line of reasoning above is:

God's plan of salvation goes back to the beginning.
Therefore, it is not possible that:

- (1) this way was started by a man/men; or
- (2) that a way started by man/men could be God's way
(started before the beginning of the world).

From verses stating God's glory, love, grace and purpose, plan of eternal life, redemption and kingdom existed before the world or man were ever created, the author leaps to conclude that this fellowship "began in eternity." Where is the Scripture to support this conclusion? The author's reasoning presupposes it has been proven that the "way" (referring to the fellowship on earth commonly called "the truth") is same entity as "God's way." However, there is no proof this is true.

For this conclusion to be valid, there would have to be Scriptural evidence showing that the "way" (meaning the Two by Two fellowship) is one and the same way as "God's way" of the Scripture. And there is none. The beginning of God's way is recorded in the Scripture. The beginning of Irvine's Two by Two ministry is recorded in history. What links the two? Where do they merge? How and when did they become the same way? Where is Scripture that confirms they are the same way?

When it can be shown that a similar system or format was started at two different times in history by two different sources, it's impossible for them to be the SAME identical system, way or format. One is the old, and one is the new. Irvine's way to fellowship and God's way from the beginning of time would have the same history, if they were one and the same way. Both ways would lead back "to the beginning." However, Irvine's fellowship can only be traced back to the turn of the 20th century, where it started; whereas God's way can be traced back "to the beginning," where it started. It logically follows that God's way and Irvine's fellowship are not one and the same, but are two different "ways".

Scripture that refers to God's way which existed from the beginning proves just that and nothing more—that **God's** way existed from the beginning. It cannot be used to prove Irvine's Two by Two ministry and church has existed from the beginning, without taking the Scripture out of context, or "wresting with the Scripture". Appropriating references to the beginning of GOD'S plan and way and applying them to Irvine's fellowship existing today is far from "rightly dividing the word of truth." Those who insist that this equivocation is true interpretation have fabricated their own beginning which has absolutely no connection with that which was planned of God through his Son Jesus before the foundation of the world.

Asserting, "This way is from the beginning" evades questions about the founder. It has also caused Jesus' Way to become merged in the some minds with Irvine's way, or into one method or system of fellowship. Amazingly, many of those who circulated this prevarication have even deceived themselves into believing it as well as deceived themselves they aren't lying, (overlooking that their intent is to deceive). They toy with people's souls through word play, and double-talk, knowing full well many take their meaning to be apostolic succession and trust them with their souls.

When a person resigns themselves to some EVIL action, their vision becomes dim through their efforts to read into their action some redeeming GOOD. In trying to justify the EVIL action, they discover a way to attain some GOOD, (in this case, by being able to lure people into "this fellowship" more easily). Then at some point in their blind satisfaction with the success of their "GOOD", they even come to the place where they view EVIL as being GOOD itself. In their blindness, the EVIL deception actually begins to appear to them as GOOD in itself, and all who oppose the EVIL deception, are considered EVIL in their distorted viewpoint.

The result is that those who discover the EVIL deception and don't view it as GOOD nor approve of it, are attacked as EVIL; or they are accused for being "troublemakers, unwilling, workers of the devil, rebellious, and taking their own way", etc. Is. 5:20 alerts us to this reality of self deception: *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"*